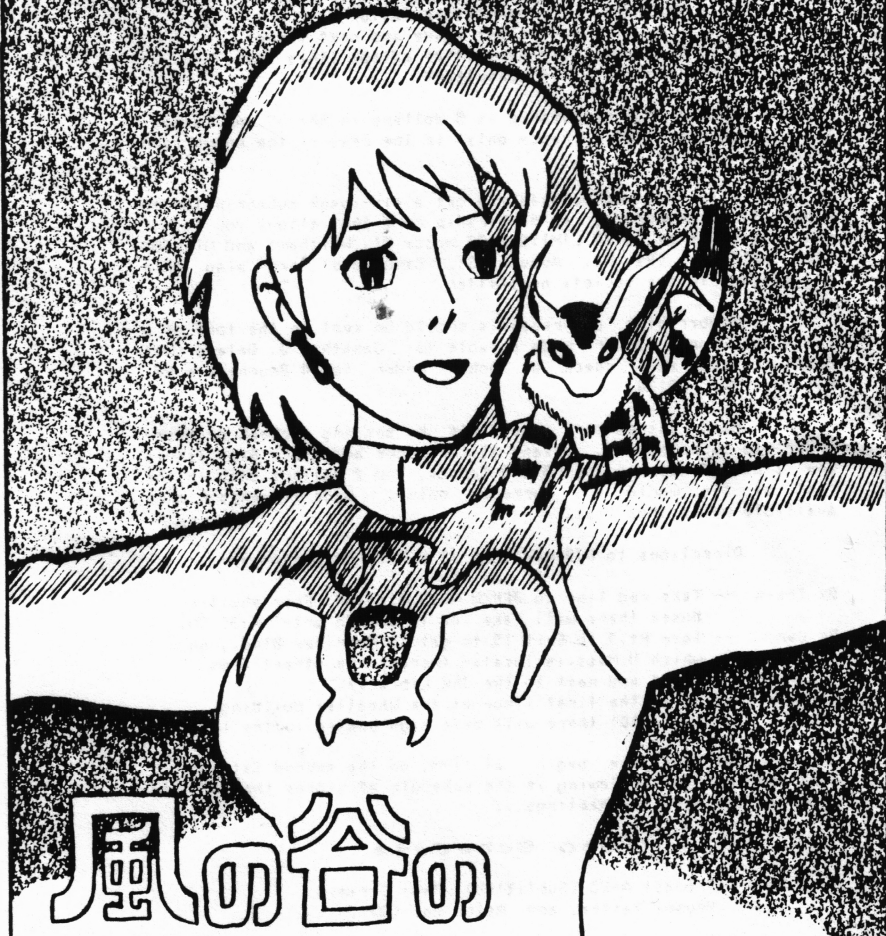


FINAL STOP:

ANDROMEDA



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Club Information

Final Stop Andromeda is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Boston Japanimation Society, whose officers are:

Jonathan J. Delano	- secretary, programmer
Marianne Popa	- society coordinator/public relations
Burton Choinski	- newsletter editor (last issue and next issue)
Daniel E. Ciora	- newsletter editor (this issue)
Frank Strom	- consultant

Annual BJS membership is 5 dollars in the US and Canada, and 10 dollars (US currency only) in the rest of the known (and unknown) universe.

With you membership you get a six-issue subscription to Final Stop Andromeda, a membership card that allows you to get discounts at OUTER LIMITS (475 Moody St. Waltham) and MILLION YEAR PICNIC (99 Mt. Auburn St. Cambridge) and also free classifieds in the society newsletter.

Memberships and renewals should be sent in the form of a check or money order made payable to: Jonathan J. Delano (Not BJS!). Send your check or money order to 14 Bournedale Rd. Boston, MA. 02130.

Back issues are available by sending a check or money order to Jonathan J. Delano at the above address. Back issues are 1 dollar each in the US and Canada, and 2 dollars each in the rest of the world (US currency only). Back Issues are only available while they last.

Directions to BJS meetings at U.Mass in Boston --

By Train -- Take red line to JFK/U MASS Station Free shuttle buses there will take you to U.MASS until 4:30 PM.

By Car -- Take Rt.3 to Exit 15 to get to Morrissey Blvd., on which U.Mass is located (Across the street from Ch.56 and next to the JFK Library).

At U.Mass -- go to the first floor of the Wheatley Building (No. 010) there will be a sign posted in the lobby.

All meetings begin at 1:PM, on the second Saturday of each month. the following is the schedule of videos that will be shown at the next two meetings...

Video Schedule

June 13 -- Project A-KO (Subtitled), Mami Creamy, Urusei Yastra, and Astro Boy (BW).

July 11 -- Dagger of Kamui, Diacon III and IV, an episode of Saint Sayia and ZZ Gundam.

AndroMedia

by Daniel E. Ciora

There are probably a few questions that you are asking your selves about this issue of FSA. First, why is Nausicaa on the cover of this issue when there is no article about that movie? The answer is simple, as this is my first issue as editor, and since Nausicaa is my favorite anime character, I commissioned my friend Eric DeWolff to draw a Nausicaa cover.

The second question is probably "why did you entitle your column "AndroMedia". Well the answer to that is also simple - I love puns.

I would like to thank everyone who helped with this issue of FSA. Eric DeWolff (for his cover), Ed Fuqua (for his article on Matsumoto), and Motoi Sato (for his drawing which appears on the last page of this issue). I would also like to thank Jonathan Delano for his patience - especially since I missed the dead line for this issue.

Now I would like to thank everyone who helped make my job difficult and received no credit for it - the members who spent time drawing or writing and ended up with nothing printed. I realize how depressing it must be to submit articles (which the officers of the BJS asked for) only to find out that they did not get printed. Thank you Ben Melanson, Debbie Shamon, Dennis Richards, John McCluskey, George H. Lellios, and Jol Silversmith.

Well I was going to print my editorial on American censorship but I ran out of room - see you in issue twenty.

Wanted

Hey everyone,

Final Stop Andromeda needs submissions! We will take any anime-related material. Send your submissions to:

Burton Choinski
2 Charena Rd.
Wayland, MA 01778

If you have any questions you can call him at:

(617) 358-2970

Here is how you can reach the editor of issue number twenty of FSA:

Daniel E. Ciora
322 New London Ave.
West Warwick, RI 02893
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Matsumoto's Universe

Part I: The Voyages of the Yamato

by Edward Fuqua

What follows is an attempt to list the animation based on the works of Reiji Matsumoto in some coherent order. I have tried, whenever possible, to place all of the widely divergent stories into a single line of continuity. When a story has several variations I will attempt to cover all of the versions, giving preference to the story which fits best into the overall continuity. This is still a work in progress since I am constantly discovering new works to add to the chronology. Much of this is available to me only in Japanese and at least one story I have not seen at all. Whenever possible I have filled in gaps in my knowledge with articles in various magazines. This presents another problem, since several of these magazines are flatly contradictory. Again I have tried to make all the known facts fit into a cohesive picture.

"Space Cruiser Yamato" (Uchu Senkan Yamato) - This television series was first broadcast in Japan from 1974 to 1975 and in 1977 it was made into a film.

The story takes place in the year 2199, the planet Gamila has nearly conquered the Earth. Gamila's radioactive planet bombs have wiped out most of the life on Earth and driven the survivors into huge underground cities. This only delays the inevitable as the radiation slowly seeps through the Earth's crust. The Earth ships bravely attack the Gamilan ships, but are overwhelmed by Gamila's superior technology. As the fleet is wiped out two cadets posted far from the action discover a wrecked space ship. On board is a message from the beautiful Queen Starsha of the planet Iskandar. She tells them how to construct a warp drive for their ships and offers a solution to the deadly planet bombs, if they can get to her to pick it up. Iskandar is one hundred and fifty eight thousand light years from Earth, an almost unbelievable distance to the humans.

With their fleet gone the new wave motion engine is fitted into the wreck of the battleship Yamato, which was sunk in World War II and now lies encased in the dried mud of what was once the Pacific Ocean. The two cadets, Susumo Kodai and Daisuke Shima join the elite crew of the Yamato for their deep space mission. They meet the beautiful Yuki Mori who becomes Kodai's love interest. The ship is captained by the grim and gruff Juzo Okita. Eventually Kodai becomes the ship's executive officer and Shima becomes the chief navigator.

Leader Desslar, the leader of the Gamilans, opposes the Yamato's mission every inch of the way. Eventually the Yamato reaches Iskandar where Kodai discovers his long lost brother, Mamoru, is living there with Starsha. The Yamato makes it back to Earth with the cure to the radiation that, in seven more days, would have caused all life on Earth to perish. Fully half the crew has been lost, and Captain Okita succumbs to radiation poisoning just as the crew of the Yamato sight their home planet. Their mission is a success, the Earth is saved.

Shown originally in Japan during the afternoon the

series was at first seen only by very young who failed to respond to the deeply romantic, almost lyrical, aspects of the story. Older viewers discovered it only after several reruns and the release of the film. Once it took off "Yamato" exploded like a bombshell, starting a multi-million dollar merchandising machine, and kicking off an animation boom that has not let up to this day. Of course it spawned the inevitable sequels, which is what this article is about.

In 1979 the series became part of fifty two episodes released to American television under the name "Star Blazers". Although one can complain about the choppy editing and strained dialogue, the truth is that this series is one of the best translations to come from Japan. Although much of the violence was taken out, the power of the story shines through. For many Americans, including myself, this was the first exposure to serious Japanese animation. It was this series that sparked, in me, an interest in learning more about the world of Japanese animation.

Arriverderci Yamato (1978) - The success of the first Yamato film convinced the studio to do a second theatrical film. This was even more popular than the first, and is considered by some to be the finest animated film ever made.

This movie starts off in the year 2201, the Earth has rebuilt itself a great deal in the year since the first adventure ended. The once proud Yamato has been put in mothballs, replaced by a fleet of new ships, all built with wave motion engines. After picking up a call for help from the planet Telezart, Kodai reassembles the original crew of the Yamato and steal the once proud ship. When they reach the planet Telezart they encounter a glowing woman, clothed in nothing but her long blond hair, who tells them that she is Teresa, the cosmic spirit of universal love. She charges the crew of the Yamato with the task of destroying the White Comet Empire and restoring peace to the universe. Being no fools, they agree.

The White Comet Empire, on its way to destroy the Earth, manages to enlist the aid of Desslar, one of the few Gamilans to survive the destruction of their home planet back in the first adventure. Desslar is eager for revenge, and after many battles finally comes face to face with Kodai. Before the duel can be resolved Yuki is mortally wounded by laser fire. Desslar nobly throws himself out of an airlock to atone for all the evil that he has done. By the time the battle reaches its conclusion the entire Earth fleet has been wiped out for a second time and the Yamato's crew has been reduced to eighteen. When all seems lost Kodai uses the crippled Yamato for a kamikaze attack that destroys the White Comet. Kodai and Yuki are united in death, joining the ghostly images of their fallen comrades as the Yamato sails into oblivion.

"Space Cruiser Yamato II" - New animation stretched out the story of the second film into a television series, but there are enough important changes in the plot to give it a separate listing. In this version of the story when Kodai and Desslar have their final duel Desslar has the upper hand until

Yuki throws herself across the wounded body of Kodai. Touched by her compassion Desslar can not deliver the death blow and instead gives them a clue to defeating the White Comet Empire. It is obvious that the Yamato and all of the major characters live at the end of the television version and that all sequels are from this continuity line.

This series was shown in the U.S. under the title "Star Blazers", although some TV Guides refer to it as "New Star Blazers." It is really part of the same syndication package as "Space Cruiser Yamato."

"Yamato: The New Journey" (1979) - This is a ninety minute tv movie appearing hot on the heels of the second series, and is a direct sequel to that series.

With the Earth still reeling from the attack of the White Comet Empire, the Yamato is refitted and pressed back into service. They are sent on a training voyage where Kodai has his hands full trying to control a group of inept cadets. Suddenly a call for help from an old friend forces the Yamato into battle as the planet Iskandar is under attack. Actually there are only three people on the entire planet, Queen Startsha, Kodai's older brother Mamoru, and their new born daughter Sasha. Naturally the Yamato rushes to their aid.

the planet is being attacked by an advance fleet from the Dark Nebula Empire. To save the planet Kodai joins forces with Desslar and his rebuilt fleet. Even this proves to be not enough. When Mamoru and Sasha are safely aboard the Yamato Starsha blows up her planet, killing herself and the attacking fleet. With the menace ended Desslar returns to the task of finding a new home for his people. The Yamato heads back to Earth.

Serving mainly as a bridge between larger projects, this tv movie lacks the expensive, high quality animation of the feature films, but is still entertaining. The plot bears a strange resemblance to Star Trek III: The Wrath of Khan.

Be Forever Yamato (1980) - this theatrical sequel to the tv movie is a direct continuation of the plot. In theaters this film opened with a normal aspect ratio, but expanded to wide screen size for the big battles in the second half of the film. Of course this effect is entirely lost on those who have to watch it on video tape.

In twenty two hundred and two the Dark Nebula Empire locates the Earth. The Yamato is nowhere to be seen, Kodai is in command of another ship, and even Shima has his own command. It hardly matters, since both their ships are wrecked, along with the rest of Earth's fleet, during the aliens surprise attack. Dark Nebula war machines destroy everything in their path. Some of the war machines look like Martian tripods in what was probably a tribute to The War of the Worlds. With the city in flames, Kodai and his crew gather at the Yamato memorial under the statue of Captain Okita. Here they learn that the Yamato is safely in hiding. They race to the ship but Yuki is wounded and left behind as the Yamato takes off. The Dark Nebulans have erected a huge bomb ten stories tall, which they threaten to

detonate, blowing up half the Earth, unless the Yamato is turned over to them.

While the Yamato heads for the Dark Nebula, Yuki is captured and nursed back to health by the Dark Nebulan Lieutenant Arufon. He is quite taken with her, and she must fight off his attentions until he allows her to escape. She comes back with the army in an attempt to defuse the bomb from inside.

Meanwhile Kodai is having problems of his own, with one of his new crew members, the lovely Mio, who is actually his niece Sasha who has grown to maturity in a year, thanks to her half alien metabolism. She is obviously smitten with Kodai, but he nobly manages to avoid her and the possibilities of incest. The Yamato finally manages to destroy the automated crystal planet that was the heart of the Dark Nebula, but not before Mio is killed. Her spirit meets with that of her mother and she goes to join the ghost crew of the Yamato who appear to welcome her. As the closing credits roll, Yuki and Kodai are reunited on Earth.

"Space Cruiser Yamato III" (1980) - This series was written and directed by Matsumoto with Toshio Takeda as co-director. Originally announced as a 52 episode epic, it was cut back to only 25 episodes.

The action starts in twenty two hundred and five on the new Gammilan home planet, which finds itself at war with the Bolar Commonwealth. During one of their fights the Earth sun is struck by a stray missile, which causes the sun to enlarge. Nothing can stop it, the Earth will be burned to a crisp in a year. The threat is ignored by Earth's corrupt government, but the military sends the Yamato out on a deep space mission which is actually a quest to find a new world that the people of Earth can migrate to. Nearsighted and foolish government officials are a favorite Matsumoto theme which is later used as a prominent recurring theme in the "Harlock" series.

When the government finally realizes the danger, the Earth launches a fleet of old battleships into space to find a new home. The Yamato finds the wreck of the United States battleship Arizona, which is lost with all hands after crashing on an alien planet. I guess this is supposed to be some sort of Japanese in-joke, since the Arizona was sunk at Pearl Harbor during World War II.

For their mission the Yamato is filled with another group of inexperienced cadets who have to be whipped into shape. One arrogant new cadet clashes with Kodai almost immediately and is assigned to kitchen duty where he must learn humility and responsibility. Ultimately, of course, he proves himself in combat and gets to leave the kitchen and join the bridge crew. This is something of a role reversal, since in the first story it was Kodai who was the arrogant cadet, and is now the older, wiser captain.

The Yamato doesn't want to get involved with the fight between the Gammilans and the Bolars, but they are swept into it. While hunting for a new Earth the Yamato finds a living planet at whose heart lies Queen Luda. Later she turns out to be an incarnation of the goddess Mother Shalbart, who, like any good

Matsumoto goddess, has the power to save Earth. She gives them Hydro Cosmogen, which will return Earth's sun to normal. Just before they use it the Bolar fleet attacks, and only a timely arrival by Desslar and his fleet saves the Yamato and the cure. The cadet mentioned earlier gives his life to fire the Hydro Cosmogen, but his spirit goes to Shelbart, with whom he has fallen in love. Surprisingly the antidote works, Earth is save and Desslar renews his uneasy friendship with Kodai.

The early parts of this series are so tedious that it is hard to imagine how dull it would have been if it had gone the full fifty two episodes. It has several nice episodes, particularly the living planet, which greets the crew of the Yamato with images of their friends and loved ones. Then there is the episode with the fight against the sub space submarines - no kidding, they sink down into "sub-space" until only their periscopes are visible - this really has to be seen to be believed. The best part is that the sub commander looks a lot like a Gammlan version of Captain Harlock.

This series was released to the American audiences as part of the "Star Blazers" series, although, due to the glut of animation currently available, it no longer receives the airplay that it once did. In addition the voices and the editing on the third series are inferior to the original. The story is left intact, but there are many problems. Several times when Japanese captions appear on the bottom of the screen they have allowed the scenes to run without translating them or blocking them out. In addition the beautiful opening credits from the Japanese series have been jettisoned in favor of using the opening credits from the second story. They didn't even change the words to the theme song, although I suppose "A cry for help, a desperate plight, makes the Star Force reunite" sort of says it all.

Final Yamato - Someone decided to let the series go out with a bang in this lavishly produced feature film known in Japan as Space Cruiser Yamato- the Concluding Chapter. Even though that's the direct translation - the logo contains the words "Final Yamato" in English, so that's what it's known as over here. Apparently this film did not make as much of a profit as the producers wanted for it was pulled from theaters and re-released in 70mm, but with twenty minutes edited out. The original version is available on laser disk. This is apparently a sequel to Be Forever Yamato and it ignores the continuity of "Yamato III."

In the year twenty two hundred and three another galaxy strangely warps into existence over our own, causing all manner of strange interstellar things to occur. Sent to investigate, the Yamato finds the new Gammlan home destroyed and Kodai believes Desslar is dead. They also find the planet Deingil, which is being flooded by the water planet Aquarius. Kodai loses dozens of his crew in an ill fated rescue attempt. Then the Deingil fleet attacks, believing the Yamato to be responsible for what happened. The crippled Yamato crash lands back on Earth with two thirds her crew dead.

As usual, the battle against the enemy fleet destroys

all of the Earth's ships except for the Yamato, which must go out again to do battle. Kodai refuses to be captain after the losses of his earlier mission. The new captain turns out to be none other than old Juzo Okita, who died in their first mission. The crew, not to mention the audience, is shocked to see him back. There is no apparent explanation for his resurrection, but perhaps it's contained in the Japanese dialogue, which I have yet to find translated.

After the usual space battles the Yamato crashes into the enemy ship so that they can engage in hand to hand combat. Shima is mortally wounded, but he staggers back to the ship and pilots them to safety before dying. The Deingils push the water planet towards Earth in an attempt to drown them into submission. Just when the Yamato is about to be overwhelmed by the enemy vassals Desslar shows up to rescue them. As Aquarius nears the Earth Earth will be inundated by a huge column of water. Earth plans to explode the Yamato in front of the column of water and save the world. The crew leaves, but Okita stays behind, like a good captain, to go down with the ship. The explosion creates an ocean in space where the Yamato sinks for her final rest. Back on Earth the crew of the Yamato gather on a beach to mourn and to celebrate. Kodai and Yuki make plans to get married while "Have a Nice Dream" is sung on the soundtrack (in English yet!).

Is this really the end of the Yamato? Probably not, it seems to be as popular now as it ever was. Products from the older adventures continue to sell well. There was a film announced, to be done in 70mm with four channel dolby sound. It would star Desslar, of course the Yamato wouldn't appear at all. It was hoped that this would inspire a television series. In addition Yamato producer Yoshinubu Hishizaki has long wanted to do a live action Yamato film. Supposedly he approached the American government about buying an old battleship to use as a full size prop in the film. For some reason the government turned it down. So far I have yet to hear the final fate of either of these projects and I have no idea as to whether they are still being planned, have been completed, or simply abandoned. ("Part II: Harlock and Company" to be published in Number 20 OF FSA.)

Classifieds

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Anime. You name it I'm interested. Buy, sell, or trade!
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